as well as infrastructural support to be provided by the State Government.

World economic recession in IT sector

1913. SHRI DINA NATH MISHRA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether world economic recession has hit the Indian Information Technology Sector in the recent past and Government have taken notice of the down turn;

(b) if so, what are the measures contemplated by Government to arrest this sector's waning performance as it is vulnerable to overseas shocks especially US-market; and

(c) whether there is plan for exploring untapped markets of the under-developed countries and special ties with ASEAN countries, EU countries and others?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN) : (a) There has been some decline in the growth of software exports as a result of slowdown in the world economy. During the first half of the year, the exports have grown by 33 percent against last year's annual growth of 55 percent.

(b) and (c) The Electronics and Computer Software Export Promotion Council (ESC), a society under the Ministry of IT, has been taking steps to explore other thrust markets like Latin America, Europe, UK, Japan, Australia etc. A global event "India soft" is also being organized in Delhi to provide platform to small and medium companies in India to interact and explore trade possibilities with visiting delegates from various countries.

Setting up of A.B. Vajpayee Centre in Mongolia

1914. SHRI RAMACHANDRA KHUNTIA: Will the Minister of INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have decided to set up Atal Bihari Vajpayee Centre of Excellence in Information & Communication Technology in Mongolia;

(b) if so, the details thereof alongwith the likely expenditure on the Centre;

(c) by when, the Centre is likely to start functioning at Mongolia; and

(d) the likely benefits to India from the Centre?

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI PRAMOD MAHAJAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) (i) The Centre of Excellence for ICT would be established at School of Telecom and IT, Mongolian Technical University, Ulaanbaatar, Mongolia. The Centre would be augmented with State of the Art facilities in IT and Computer Sciences related educational fields.

(ii) Extending help in setting up a few Community Information Centres (up to five Centres).

(iii) Sharing of Indian experiences and Software in the field of E-Governance.

(iv) Exchange of experts and training of Mongolian professionals in Indian as well as Mongolia.

The total estimated expenditure would be around Rs. 5 crores (US $ 1 million).

(c) By 31st December, 2002.

(d) India and Mongolia have long-standing relations culturally and socially for centuries. The sharing of the IT expertise gained by India by setting up the Centre will further strengthen the friendly relation between the two countries and help Indian IT industries in improving Software export market. This would also help for exploration of the third world market by way of setting up joint venture in the field of IT.